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Draft ministerial declaration of the 2010 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, submitted by the President of the Council

Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations, participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York from 28 June to 2 July 2010, whose annual ministerial review has had as its theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women",

Having met three months before the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, to be held from 20 to 22 September 2010, which will focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015,

Have adopted the following declaration:

1. We reaffirm that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[2] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[3] by States parties, our commitments under the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

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Action,[4] the outcomes of other relevant United Nations summits and conferences, and relevant resolutions, is part of an interconnected framework that underpins the work undertaken to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and produces essential contributions to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.[5]

2. We reaffirm that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women's full enjoyment of human rights and the eradication of poverty are essential to economic and social development, including the achievement of all of the Millennium Development Goals. We also reaffirm the vital role of women as agents of development.

3. We emphasize the commitment made by the Economic and Social Council to contribute to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

4. We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women, and pledge our full support to its operationalization, which will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide.

5. We express deep concern at the negative impact of the ongoing global crisis such as the financial and economic crisis, the food crisis and continuing food insecurity, and the energy crisis, as well as the challenges presented by natural disasters and climate change to the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the Millennium Development Goals. We call for enhanced cooperation and concerted action to address these crises and challenges. We recognize that women are disproportionately affected by many of these crises and challenges, but we also recognize that women have a key leadership role to play, including in decision-making, when responding to them.

6. We commit ourselves to taking the necessary steps to achieve all the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

7. While noting that, in the past decade, some progress has been achieved in realizing the Millennium Development Goals, we express concern at the unevenness of the progress towards achieving the goals and targets both regionally and thematically, in particular Goal 3 on promoting gender equality and empowering women, Goal 5 on improving maternal health, including achieving universal access to reproductive health, and Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, as well as the objectives encompassed within the gender equality-related dimensions of all the other Millennium Development Goals. We stress that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth and that achieving Goal 3 is essential to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals.

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[4] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

8. We call for integrated, comprehensive, multisectoral and gender-responsive approaches to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which are based on strong coordination and cooperation across all sectors. We commit to ensuring that national development plans, poverty eradication strategies, strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other macrolevel planning instruments and processes systematically contribute to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. We underline the critical role of the global partnership for development in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We therefore call upon all countries to strengthen efforts in this regard.

9. We recognize that action on a number of cross-cutting issues will positively enhance the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals. Towards this end, we:

(a) Stress the need for efforts to tackle discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes which perpetuate discrimination against women and stereotypic roles of men and women, and recognize the important role of the media and education in addressing negative portrayals of women and girls;

(b) Emphasize the need for a holistic approach to ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls across all sectors, including through initiatives designed to prevent and combat gender-based violence; to encourage and support efforts by men and boys to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence, especially gender-based violence; and to increase awareness of their responsibility in respect of ending the cycle of violence;

(c) Also emphasize the need for effective measures at all levels to ensure the full empowerment of women in all areas, including equal participation of women and men at all levels and in decision-making processes in all areas;

(d) Further emphasize the critical role of men and boys, and call for measures aimed at fostering their greater involvement in efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(e) Emphasize the need to strengthen the full integration of women into the formal economy, in particular into economic decision-making, and to improve our ability to measure, in quantitative and qualitative terms, unremunerated and informal work that is not reflected in national accounts in order to more accurately assess and reflect its value in such accounts as well as in economic and fiscal policies, so that women's time can be valued and women and men can enjoy equal treatment, pay and economic power, including through the sharing of paid and unpaid work;

(f) Also emphasize the need for measures to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are not subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination, or excluded from participation in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, and in this regard, further emphasize the need to ensure their equal access to education at all levels, including technical and vocational training, and adequate rehabilitation programmes, health care and services, and employment opportunities, to protect and promote all of their human rights and to eliminate existing inequalities between women and men with disabilities;

(g) Further emphasize the crucial role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in respect of enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating poverty. We stress the need for concerted action at all levels to support rural women's economic empowerment by, inter alia, ensuring women's equal access to productive resources, financing, technologies, training and markets, and facilitating rural women's participation in planning and decision-making, so that they can realize their full potential.

10. Recognizing that implementation gaps in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women persist, we stress the importance of implementing the following strategies across all areas so as to close those gaps:

(a) Strengthen the political commitment and leadership of all stakeholders, at all levels and across all sectors, in support of gender equality, the empowerment of women, women's full enjoyment of human rights and the eradication of poverty;

(b) Implement comprehensive national policies and action plans on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including for the achievement of the internationally agreed goals and commitments, which include measurable goals, targets and timetables; establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms; and assess the costs of, and provide necessary funding for, implementation;

(c) Promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, to ensure that the needs and priorities of women and girls, and men and boys, are taken into account;

(d) Strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and, where they exist, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, so as to enable them to play a stronger role across all sectors;

(e) Enact and strengthen comprehensive legal frameworks that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and prohibit discrimination against women and girls, including, as appropriate, through the reviewing of existing legal frameworks, and ensure the full and effective enforcement and monitoring of those comprehensive frameworks, as well as take appropriate measures to ensure equal access to justice;

(f) Design and implement programmes, including educational and awareness-raising programmes, that promote the active involvement of men and boys in eliminating gender stereotypes as well as fostering respectful relationships with women and girls; encourage men and boys to become agents of change in promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls and promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women across the life cycle; and combat stereotypic attitudes concerning women's and men's roles and responsibilities within the family and society at large;

(g) Intensify national efforts, including with the support of the international community, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; develop measures that encourage and support the efforts of men and boys to take an active role in this regard, as part of strategies of zero tolerance for violence against women and girls; and address the consequences of violence against them, including

by providing adequate short- and long-term support for victims of violence, and enhance judicial capacity in this regard;

(h) Develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment, including through enhancing their access to full and productive employment and decent work and to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and at supporting women's technical, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities and initiatives, with a view to ensuring sustainable and adequate income-generation and empowering women as equal partners with men in these domains;

(i) Promote and protect women's equal access to adequate housing, property and land including rights to inheritance, and enable them to secure access to credit, through appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative measures;

(j) Facilitate access by women to affordable microfinance, in particular microcredit, which can contribute to poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(k) Ensure women's access to social protection schemes, provide adequate social safety nets, and strengthen State-based and community-based support systems as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women and girls, particularly those living in poverty, to withstand adverse economic environments and so as to contribute to their well-being;

(l) Develop and strengthen policies, strategies and programmes designed to address the inequality affecting women and girls in respect of access to and achievement of education at all levels; and commit to eradicating illiteracy and to ensuring, by 2015, access to and completion of free and compulsory quality primary education, and in this regard, to reaffirming the Dakar Framework for Action[6] on education for all;

(m) Ensure access of women and girls to formal and non-formal education and vocational training, including lifelong learning and retraining, and adult and long-distance education, including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, in order to promote the empowerment of women, inter alia, through enhancing and facilitating women's access to full and productive employment and decent work;

(n) Improve access to health systems for women and girls, including through gender-sensitive national strategies and public-health policies and programmes that are comprehensive, affordable and better geared to meeting their needs and that encourage women's active participation in their design and implementation. In this regard, we recognize the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases and their impact on women, and stress the need for multisectoral responses and the integration of cost-effective interventions aimed at combating these diseases;

(o) Reaffirm that gender equality and the empowerment of women cannot be achieved without promoting and protecting the right of women to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health. We reiterate our commitments in this regard, including the commitments

[6] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

relating to sexual and reproductive health, and the promotion and protection of all human rights in this context. We emphasize the need for the provision of universal access to reproductive health, including integrating family planning, sexual health and health-care services in national strategies and programmes;

(p) Strengthen initiatives that would increase the capacities of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from HIV infection, in view of the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and ensure that HIV/AIDS programmes address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls, taking into account local circumstances. We also emphasize that gender inequality is one of the major drivers of the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

(q) Increase, where necessary, resources, both human and financial, required to support the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and programmes, and for improved tracking and monitoring of expenditures allocated for the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming, including through undertaking gender-responsive budget planning, allocation and revenue raising, and encourage the integration of gender perspectives in aid modalities and efforts to enhance aid delivery mechanisms;

(r) Improve and systematize the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data; enhance capacity development in this regard; and develop gender-sensitive indicators to support legislative developments, policymaking and national systems for monitoring and reporting on progress and impacts;

(s) Pursue and strengthen a broad range of partnerships at national and international levels in a sustainable manner, including among members of the international community, Governments, civil society, including women's organizations, and the private sector, and the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, in particular in supporting the efforts of national authorities to effectively plan and implement their commitments towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

11. We underline our commitments to strengthening national efforts, including with the support of international cooperation, aimed at addressing the rights and needs of women and girls affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts, other complex humanitarian emergencies, trafficking in persons and terrorism, within the context of actions geared to the realization of the internationally agreed goals and commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the Millennium Development Goals. We also underline the need to take concerted actions in conformity with international law to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the rights of women and girls living under foreign occupation, so as to ensure the achievement of the above-mentioned goals and commitments.

12. We urge developed countries that have not yet done so, in accordance with their commitments, to make concrete efforts towards meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15-0.20 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals

and targets and help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

13. We request the Economic and Social Council to take appropriate action to promote and ensure effective and systematic gender mainstreaming into all areas of its work, including in its subsidiary bodies.

14. We reaffirm the importance of equal participation of women and men at all levels in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding processes, and commit to intensifying our efforts in this regard. Noting the upcoming tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), we urge the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, in pursuance of their relationship as established in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[7] to explore ways of strengthening the contribution of women towards this end.

15. We recognize the important role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of Member States to implement their commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women, and also recognize the importance of strengthened coordination, coherence, efficiency and accountability within the United Nations system as well as the enhancing of partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, foundations and other entities of civil society. In this regard, we take note of the contributions and opportunities offered by recent ongoing initiatives such as the Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" and, inter alia, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women; the Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders; the Global Jobs Pact, adopted on 19 June 2009 by the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization at its ninety-eighth session; and the Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business, offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, the marketplace and the community. We encourage the Secretary-General to take a more comprehensive approach in addressing all twelve critical areas identified in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

16. We encourage United Nations country teams to support, through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, national efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals and commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

17. We call upon the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, to take into account in its deliberations, the recommendations contained in the present declaration and to ensure that gender perspectives are fully integrated in the outcome of the Meeting.

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[7] See General Assembly resolution 60/1.